

Scituate Historical Society - Archives



“...educating all who seek knowledge of the history of the town and people of Scituate and those municipalities that were anciently a part of the town..”

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Introduction

The Society has an extraordinary group of items in the Archives from 100 years of collecting (see Appendix I):

Artifacts Small, Med, Large	Framed Objects Art, Photo, Documents	Textiles	Documents Records, Collections, Personal papers	Rolled Storage Maps, Blueprints	Flat Storage Oversize photos and docs, Newspapers, Scrapbooks	Rare Books, Postcards, Glass negatives
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These resources were studied and enjoyed by over 580+ visitors over 2014 and 2015. Of these visitors, 280+ were from Scituate and the rest were comprised of visitors from 25 states and 6 countries. In addition, over 500 Scituate students visited the Little Red Schoolhouse during this time period.

The Society's goal of preserving the artifacts and papers that tell us of our heritage, and making that knowledge accessible to any who wish to know of it, is at risk because the Archives are housed in a facility that lacks environmental controls and adequate space.

Current Archives Storage Conditions

- Archives are co-located with the Society's libraries for researchers, but located in 2 rooms in the basement of 43 Cudworth Rd
- The building is >100 years old with cellar walls made of fitted stone subject to dampness, leaks, and dirt
- There is no heat or air conditioning; collections are exposed to heat, humidity, contaminants, insects, rodents, etc.
- Temperature >80 degrees over 8 weeks in 2015
- *A suitable environment for mixed collections needs to be consistently cool and dry: 55-60 F and 50% RH (see Appendix II)*
- Archive spaces are full – there is no room for expansion; historic newspapers and other items are currently stored on open basement shelves; no work area for processing collections or for performing conservation
- Textiles are stored in attic of G.A.R. Hall due to lack of space at 43 Cudworth Road

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Current Archives Storage Conditions

Archive Room 1 – Paper-based collections

- 22' x 15'6"
- 114 linear feet of storage



Unsecured and unprotected open storage in basement for overflow of newspaper, books, Town Reports



Archive Room 2 – Objects & Oversize

- 24' x 8'



Archive Room – G.A.R. Textiles

- 276 linear feet of shelf space



The Society's Commitment to Collections

- Adopted a formal Collection Policy and related procedures
- Established a Collections Committee that meets several times a year
- Established a budget for archival materials funded through receipts from historic site visits
- Funded the Assistant Archivist position for 10 hours a week
- Supported the use of PastPerfect collections management software
- Scheduled to participate in a 5 month Environmental Monitoring Program offered by the MA Board of Library Commissioners
- Institutional member of the Society of American Archivists (donated by Society member)
- Members of the American Association for State and Local History and New England Museum Association
- Researched grant opportunities for collections management. Attended workshop on grant writing 11/2015 sponsored by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and MA Historical Records Advisory Board, led by a Preservation Specialist from the MA Board of Library Commissioners.
 - Obtaining funds for collections management difficult for a few reasons: matching funds often required; administrative effort is prohibitive; grantors require appropriate methods, practices, and physical environments (its unlikely that a trust would invest in items kept in a cellar with no environmental controls)
 - Advised to seek local funds such as CPC first

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Examples of artwork that are part of the Town's history and cultural heritage but also "museum quality"
.....and being housed in a basement

Josephine Miles Lewis

1865 - 1959

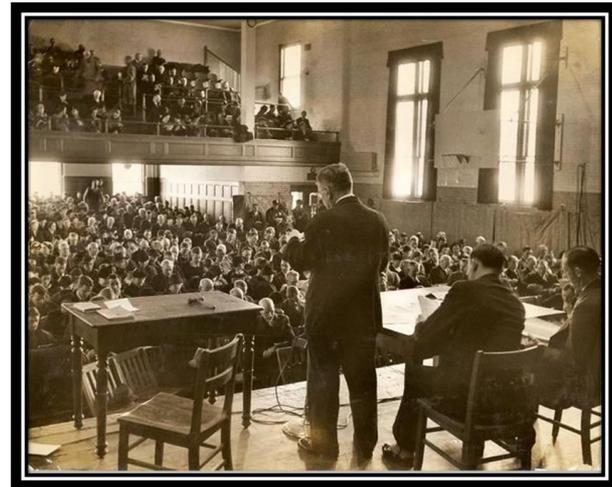
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA (Portrait of young Olivia Hall playing a harp)
- Farnsworth Art Museum, Rockland, Me
- Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
- And others



Hansel Mieth

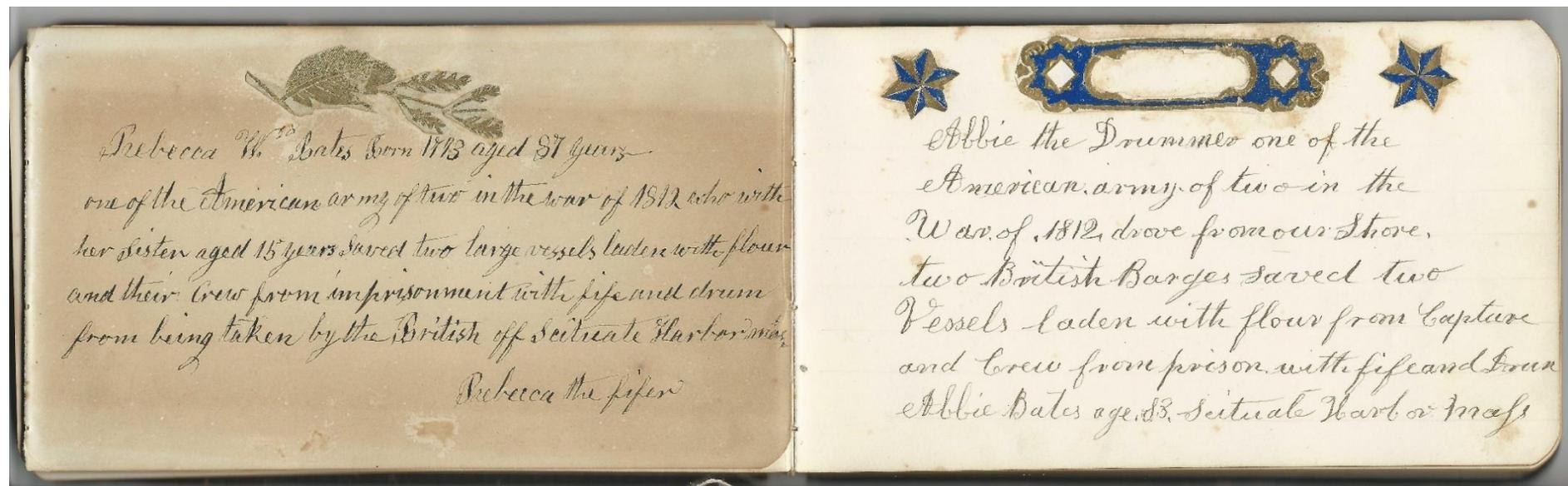
1909 - 1998

- *LIFE* magazine photojournalist
- Subject of Independent Lens documentary *Hansel Mieth: Vagabond Photographer*
- *Center for Creative Photography*
- Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA



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- Dynamic organization: approximately 78 gifts in 2015
- Recent gift: Capt. Thos. Burrows; Brig Argus
- Maritime treasure: Litchfield Navigation Workbook



Rebecca Wth Bates Born 1773 aged 37 years
one of the American army of two in the war of 1812 who with
her sister aged 15 years saved two large vessels laden with flour
and their crew from imprisonment with fife and drum
from being taken by the British off Scituate Harbor Mass
Rebecca the piper

Abbie the Drummer one of the
American army of two in the
War of 1812 drove from our Shore
two British Barges saved two
Vessels laden with flour from Capture
and crew from prison with fife and drum
Abbie Bates age 33 Scituate Harbor Mass

**The Scituate Historical Society Archives are an irreplaceable record of the Town's
history and cultural heritage. If these items are destroyed,
they cannot be replaced.**

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Letter from 3rd grade student

Dear Mr. Ball and Volunteers,

Thank you for helping us at the amazing historical sites. I really enjoyed the field trip.

I liked that in the runway next to the lighthouse, there was true, but fascinating stories. My favorite was the flying Santa story. Also, I liked the Little Red School House. It was cool that I would be able to know who my ancestors are. Lastly, I liked the Mann House. There are a lot of mysteries in the Mann House. What happened to the Keys? How did he get the Spanish coins.

Thank you for guiding us and I hope to visit these sites this summer.

Sincerely,

Appendix

- I. Collections – 2016
- II. “Suitability of Storage Environments for Collection Materials” Image Permanence Institute